

**Environmental Assessment
and
Decision Notice
for the
Evergreen Water System - Water Main Replacement Project**

August 15, 2002

Project Proposal and Justification:

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks is assessing and potentially permitting the project under the Montana Stream Protection Act. The project consists of replacing an existing 12-inch water main with another just upstream by installing pipe 3 feet below streambed. There is approximately 186 feet of pipe to be laid within the 100-year floodplain. Width of trench could approach 20 to 25 feet. Contractor will construct a temporary diversion structure and work pad in the channel. The diversion structure will isolate the work area from stream current during excavation and bed work. Trench excavation in the channel will be roughly 70 feet in length.

Site Location and Characteristics:

Stillwater River near Kalispell, just upstream of the US Highway 2 bridge in an urbanized area in Evergreen (T28N, R21W, S9). River is in a single channel at this point.

Environmental and Social Impacts:

Two potentially adverse and one minor effect were addressed; each have associated mitigative actions. The following is a summary of impacts and mitigation.

Environmental:

During trench excavation, pipe placement, and trench backfilling, fine sediments are likely to be suspended and washed downstream. This would have a negative impact on downstream habitat. The amount and duration of this sedimentation is dependent on how well the site is isolated from stream current, the level of stream flow, and the duration of in-stream construction activity. The greatest disturbance would be under conditions where current was running over the trench or disturbed streambed during construction activities. Although this disturbance cannot be completely avoided, isolating the work area and construction activities from river current and working during low flow periods can mitigate the negative impact. Under this type of scenario, river current would be diverted and isolated from the immediate work area while trenching, pipe placement, and backfilling occur. Sediment-laden water could be pumped out of the work area and treated to remove suspended sediments once backfilling was completed prior to exposing the work area to river current. The project work period

would be confined to months of lowest river flows. This approach would minimize sediment transport and negative impacts.

Terrestrial disturbance of stream banks during excavation will be mitigated by placement of topsoil, erosion control fabrics, and seeding. Banks and channel will be restored to original shapes. All construction activities will occur during low stream flow conditions.

Social:

There will be a short-term (month) work period where heavy equipment will operate. This may cause some concern for aesthetics by nearby residents.

Mitigating for potential negative impacts of sedimentation will raise the cost and duration of the construction project for the Flathead County Water & Sewer District No. 1.

Construction will block river uses temporarily during construction period.

Public Involvement:

In compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act, an environmental assessment was prepared and circulated for public comment from July 19 to August 2, 2002. Notices were advertised in local newspapers and copies were made available at the Kalispell office of Fish Wildlife and Parks, local and state libraries, and on the MFWP web site.

During the public comment period, we did not receive any comments.

Decision Notice:

Based on the purpose and justification for the project, the environmental assessment, and the public comment received, I recommend that the proposed project be permitted under the stipulations that the mitigative measures described above to minimize sediment introduction and transport be implemented.

Daniel P. Vincent, Region One Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Date